

Remarks/Arguments:

With the present amendments, claims 1-17 are pending.

Claim rejections

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,168,621 to Vrba ("Vrba").

Claim 13, as amended, recited, *inter alia*, a modular stent assembly comprising a receiving stent and a mating stent.

In order to anticipate a claim under 35 U.S.C. §102, the reference must teach every element of the claim. M.P.E.P. §2131. Furthermore, "the identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the . . . claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236 (Fed. Cir. 1989) and M.P.E.P. §2131.

Vrba only discloses a single stent 10. Vrba fails to disclose or suggest a stent assembly comprising a receiving stent *and* a mating stent. Because Vrba fails to disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claim 13, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claim 13 is improper and requests reconsideration and allowance of the claim. Claim 14 depends from claim 13, and Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14 is patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 13. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 14 is respectfully requested.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 15-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Vrba in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,325,819 to Pavcnik et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 15-17 depend from claim 13, and Applicants respectfully submit that claims 15-17 are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 13. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 15-17 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5-7, 9, and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Vrba in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0114923 to Swanick et al. ("Swanick").

Claim 1, as amended, recites, *inter alia*, a bifurcated stent being expandable from an unexpanded state to an expanded state. The stent comprises a trunk region having a self-expandable section and a balloon expandable section extending from a first end of the self-expandable section. At least one self-expandable branch extends from a second end of the self-expandable section of the trunk region.

Referring to Figs. 7 and 8 of Vrba, Vrba discloses stent 10 that includes a self-expanding trunk 30. A balloon-expandable first branch 32 extends from an end of trunk 30. A balloon-expandable second branch 34 also extends from an end of trunk 30. Referring to Figs. 9 and 10 of Vrba, Vrba discloses stent 10 that includes a self-expanding trunk 30. A self-expanding first branch 32 extends from an end of trunk 30. A balloon-expandable second branch 34 also extends from an end of trunk 30.

Swanick discloses a bifurcated stent 30 having a trunk 32 and legs 34, 36 that extend from trunk 32. The Office Action states that legs 34, 36 of Swanick may be of different diameters. The Office Action further states that it would have been obvious to make branch 34 of Vrba larger in diameter as compared to branch 32, such that members 30, 34 of Vrba together may be considered a "trunk region", including self-expanding section 34.

Applicants respectfully submit that the suggested combination of Vrba and Swanick still fails to meet the limitations of claim 1. The suggested combination of Vrba and Swanick would produce a stent having a balloon with the balloon-expandable trunk section 34 and the self-expanding section 32 extending from the same end as self-expanding trunk section 30. This combination does not disclose or suggest a self-expanding trunk section with a balloon expanding trunk section at a first end of the self-expanding trunk section, and a self-expanding branch at a second end of the self-expanding trunk section, as is recited in amended claim 1.

Because the combination of the cited prior art fails to disclose or suggest the limitations of claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art. Claims 5-7, 9, and 10 all depend from claim 1, and Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 1. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

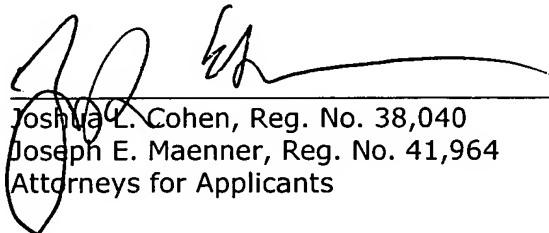
Claims 2-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Vrba in view of Swanick and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,383,892 to Cardon et al. Claims 8, 11, and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Vrba in view of Swanick and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,325,819 to Pavcnik et al. Claims 2-4, 8, 11, and 12 all

depend from claim 1, and Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 1. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In light of the above amendments and arguments, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 10-17 are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Joshua L. Cohen, Reg. No. 38,040
Joseph E. Maenner, Reg. No. 41,964
Attorneys for Applicants

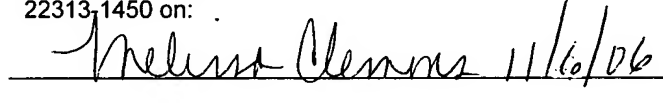
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P.O. Box 980
Valley Forge, PA 19482
(610) 407-0700

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Melissa Clemens 11/6/06

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